WHY WE ARE HERE
by
Oluyombo A Awojobi
Secretary, Board of Trustees,
OLAJIDE AJAYI CANCER CENTRE, ERUWA
Sunday, 15th December 2013

Kabiyesi!! HRM Oba S A Adegbola, Akindele I, Eleruwa of Eruwa Land, Ki ade pelori ki bata pe lese, igba odun, odun kan, Ase. Karaole o, eyin baale wa, Emeritus Prof T O Ogunlesi, my teachers and senior colleagues here present, Iyalode Yoruba Land, Chief (Mama) Alaba Lawson, gbogbo awa omo Eruwa nile, loko ati ni eyin odi, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

The second objective of the Ibarapa Community and Primary Health Programme is “To study the problems of health care delivery in the Ibarapa Community and to develop the health services of the district into a model of what an integrated local health service should be, in collaboration with the government of Western Nigeria, in a manner which can be applied to other rural districts in Nigeria and other developing countries.”

Having spent 30 years in Eruwa, headquarters of the old Ibarapa district and with the TOTAL support of Eruwa community, my teachers at Ibadan, eminently represented by those present here today and my senior colleague, Dr B G K Ajayi, we have succeeded in making “the district a model of what an integrated local health service should be…”. Only two per cent of patients in Ibarapa require treatment outside their district.

However, in recent years, we have realized this has caused a reversal of the usual rural/urban drift such that when my teacher, mentor, benefactor and elder brother, Prof O O Ajayi, CON visited the Kabiyesi some days ago and saw the multitude of patients mostly from outside Ibarapa, he remarked “The challenge now is how to manage success!!”. There and then, as usual, he gave his pragmatic solution which we have found practicable within a few days. Agba ko nitan ni ile Yoruba, Amin.

Consequent on this scenario at Awojobi Clinic Eruwa, my Egbon, Dr Ajayi, accepted the challenge to advance the course of appropriate treatment of patients with cancer in Nigeria with the establishment of a Comprehensive Cancer Centre in Eruwa. Egbon is not new to this kind of venture having successfully established a chain of full-fledged, self-sustaining eye hospitals at
Ago-Iwoye, Iseyin, Eruwa and with the headquarters at Eleta Eye Institute, Ibadan.

Dr Ajayi is the chairman of the Board of Trustees that comprises Engr Yomi Akinsola as vice-chairman, Dr Mrs Modupe Oresegun, Engr (Dr) Busola Awojobi, Dr Niyi Adenipekun, Dr Ayo Folasire and myself as secretary.

Kabiyesi, Baba Ogunlesi, my teachers, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here today to honour our teacher, Prof O O Ajayi, who, more than any other Nigerian, has done so much for the management of our compatriots who have become victims of the dreaded disease called Cancer. We are here to lay the foundation stone of OL AJIDE AJAYI CANCER CENTRE E R UWA, the first of its kind in Nigeria and with the mission statement: CARING FOR CANCER PATIENTS WITH COMPASSION.

I thank you all.

OLAJIDE AJAYI CANCER CENTRE ERUWA
COME TO MACEDONIA AND HELP

by

DR B G K AJAYI
Chairman, Board of Trustees, OAACE

The Chairman of this occasion, Emeritus Professor T.O. Ogunlesi, Kabiyesi, His Royal Majesty, The Eleruwa of Eruwa, Oba S A Akindele and Olori Akindele

The Special Guest of Honour, Professor Olajide Ajayi

Distinguished guests on the High Table

Distinguished Members of the Board of Trustees of OACCE

Members of the Eruwa Council of Chiefs

Ladies and Gentlemen

Why are we here?

We are here because the recent alarm on rising global incidence of cancer by the World Health Organisation (WHO) especially as it affects Nigeria, where the disease is most prevalent and worrisome. In Nigeria, about 10,000 cancer deaths are recorded (possibly three times more because of under-reporting)
annually while 250,000 new cases are recorded yearly. It is estimated that malignancies will increase by 23% in Nigeria (as opposed to 9% in developed countries). The bulk of the cancers arising from the infections are expectedly related to human immuno-deficiency viruses (HIV), human papilloma viruses (HPV) and hepatitis B (HBV) hepatitis C (HCV) and aflatoxin. Recent advances in the care of HIV will not diminish the health concerns associated malignancies in survivors!

What does this mean in terms of numbers?

In real numbers, with the projected population of 170million, we should expect about 500,000 new cases per annum by the year 2020. It is therefore worrisome that there are no visible plans to prevent the disease and provide treatment and care for patients.

Tony Robbins a motivational speaker and author of self-help books, *Unlimited Power* and *Awaken the Giant Within*, once said, “You see, in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. Knowing is not enough! You must take action.”

Why must the action be in Eruwa?

We have come to Eruwa for three key reasons:

The first is the uniqueness of the Eruwa Community. The community has an exceptional progressive leadership. The people are selfless and open hearted. They welcome great ideas and have refused to be indoctrinated by the popular radio station WII FM (What Is In it For Me?).

Secondly it was here in Ibarapa District that the concept of Primary Health Care was sown long before the declaration of Alma Ata. And, we are lucky to have as chairman today our Papa, Professor Theophilus Ogunlesi who midwifed the programme and nurtured it to maturity. We have chosen to name this edifice after another teacher and mentor whose name symbolizes excellence in the field of oncology and is revered in medical circles locally and internationally. Professor Olajide Olaolu Ajayi, after whom this centre is being named, is our special guest of honour.

The third reason we are in Eruwa is because of that young, vibrant, pragmatic, innovative, astute thinker, architect, engineer and surgeon who does not believe that the word “impossible” exists. His pace is often too fast for me to
follow and often I have to run after him panting. He has done so much for humanity and Eruwa. A venture like this cannot succeed without at least one passionate person like him. He is no other person than Oluyombo Awojobi. Dr. Awojobi is the initiator and life wire of this project.

The next question people would like to ask is **WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS CANCER CENTRE ABOUT?**

We are here to lay the foundation stone of a Comprehensive Cancer Centre (CCC). A Comprehensive Cancer Centre is one that is dedicated to the latest and best methods of Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment as well as excellence in Research.

Prevention entails Awareness Promotion (Health Education Programmes). HIV Surveillance. HPV Surveillance. HPV surveillance. PSA Surveillance. It includes vaccination of members of the community against proven viruses known to be associated with cancer – liver cancer and human papillomavirus, which can cause cervical cancer.

**We need infrastructural development.**

1. Access road to Eruwa must of necessity be a double carriage way because of the phenomenal increase in traffic that will inevitably follow the development of the centre.

2. Water is crucial. Already the innovative Dr. Awojobi – a physician cum engineer and architect has already built a dam to ensure continuous supply of water to the centre. But the city must have pipe borne water because of the various supporting businesses, hotels and tourism that are bound to develop in and around the area.

3. Hotels, Guest Houses and tourist attractions – Medical tourism is inevitable.

4. Electricity is important next to water and reliance on generator alone is not desirable.

**For the centre itself we have to build the following structures**

1. A space for administrative duties, including a comprehensive central computerized record-keeping system to ease service and
research, offices for staff – medical and non medical consultants, equipment maintenance office etc.

2. Buildings for out-patient services, clinics, operating theatres and laboratories, and access to ACE for biopsies of breast lumps, prostate, eye tumours, uterine cervix, etc

3. Clinical examination rooms, beds etc

4. Radiotherapy centre

5. Intensive care and operative suites as well as chemotherapy unit, palliative care unit, rehabilitation unit.

6. Lecture theatres and research laboratories

7. International Conference Halls

Staff development programmes

As a matter of urgency, in preparation for the curative aspect of care, we have to identify the needed staff and the possible places where they can commence training.

We are aware of one or two already established centres offering cancer screening services in the state. To give us a good start, we shall collaborate with such centres.

Development will be continuous and in phases depending on the availability of funds.

The Chairman, Your Royal Majesty, Special Guest of Honour, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is obvious we are blazing a trail that no one else has ever trodden in this country; we are embarking on a huge venture that is completely not-for-profit. But we know with your support and the goodwill all around you, God willing, this project – OLAJIDE AJAYI CANCER CENTRE ERUWA will come to be before our very own eyes.

Thank you.
Baba, Emeritus Prof T O Ogunlesi, our baales, high chiefs, my people of Eruwa Land, distinguished visitors, ladies and gentlemen. It is with great joy and gratitude to our Almighty God that I welcome you to Eruwa on this day our good Lord has made. Glory be to God.

Fifty years ago, a forty year old doctor left the comfortable confines of the University College Hospital, Ibadan to bring orthodox health care to the rural populace of Ibarapa. Little did he know he was blazing a trail never travelled by any mankind. He did not realize he was giving the world the only good thing our country could claim. He probably did not envisage he could be alive not only to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that momentous step but also the equally innovative and landmark products of that enterprise.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I could not attend the 90th birthday celebrations of this grand old man of medicine in Nigeria, so let us rejoice with Emeritus Prof T O Ogunlesi, the Baasegun of Ibarapa Land, with a standing ovation and a prayer that Baba will live the rest of his glorious years in health and happiness.

In the developing world, it is not common for institutions to last much longer than their originators. However, the Ibarapa Community and Primary Health Programme is a worthy exception. We have among us the professional children and grandchildren of Prof Ogunlesi who have not only sustained the programme but expanded its meaning. Emeritus Professor A Adeloye, Professors O Ajayi, Oyin Olurin and Bopo Osuntokun, though based in Ibadan, have trained Drs B G K Ajayi, Oluyomobo Awojobi, Rasaq Tijani, Niyi Adenipekun and our own son, Ayo Folasire. They have jointly made Ibarapa district to have the best health care delivery system in Nigeria.
Dr Awojobi set the pace 30 years ago with a three year stint at the District Hospital, Eruwa. But due to bureaucratic bottlenecks, he resigned and stayed among us to establish Awojobi Clinic Eruwa, ACE, which has brought Eruwa and rural surgery – Nigerian style - onto the global health map.

In 2007, he facilitated the establishment of Akef El Magragby Eye Clinic in Eruwa by his senior colleague, Dr B G K Ajayi, the specialist eye surgeon.

The Eruwa community hosted the world of rural surgery in 2011 when the fourth conference of the International Federation of Rural Surgery, IFRS, took place at the magnificent conference hall named after Dr Awojobi’s illustrious teachers, Emeritus Prof Adeloye and Prof Ajayi. Dr Awojobi is the secretary of IFRS.

Eruwa community became the cynosure of the political class on 1st March 2013 when Prof Ajayi accompanied Senators Gbenga Kaka of Ogun State and Femi Lanlehin of Oyo State on a not-to-be-forgotten visit to Eruwa. They did not come on a campaign trail but to learn how Eruwa had used health-related matters as tools and anvil for community development. It was a beautiful birthday present to Dr Awojobi who turned 62.

Not a man given to resting on his oars, Oluyombo, the Baasegun of Eruwa, was able to mobilize the formidable Board of Trustees comprising Dr B G K Ajayi as chairman, Engr Yomi Akinsola as vice-chairman, Engr (Dr) Busola Awojobi, his elder brother, Dr Mrs Modupe Oresegun, Dr Niyi Adenipekun, Dr Ayo Folasire and himself as secretary to honour their illustrious teacher, mentor, benefactor and brother, Prof Olajide Olaolu Ajayi, CON, the Jagunaso of Ijebu Land with the establishment of another first in Nigeria and probably in the world.

Baba Ogunlesi, we are assembled here to lay the foundation stone of OLAJIDE AJAYI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE, ERUWA with the full knowledge that with the guidance and zeal with which you initiated the Ibarapa programme 50 years ago, all of us, by the special grace of our God, will gather here again in health and happiness to commission this Comprehensive Cancer Centre on the 20th February 2016 when Prof Ajayi will mark his 80th birthday.

Let me assure all of us that just as the Eruwa community has donated this five acre piece of land to OLAJIDE AJAYI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE, ERUWA free of charge like we did in 1988 with the 20 acre piece of land to Awojobi Clinic Eruwa, we will mobilize our sons and daughters at
home and abroad to rise to this challenge with greater vigour in the construction of world class hotels. I must specially congratulate my son, Dr Ayo Folasire, for being part of this momentous event. You are most welcome from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is well with you in Jesus name, Amen.

With God, all things are possible. So, it will be with OLAJIDE AJAYI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE, ERUWA, Amen.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

A MAJOR BOOST TO CANCER MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

by

Dr Bayo Windapo

History was made today in faraway Eruwa, in the Ibarapa District of Oyo state where the foundation of Olajide Ajayi Cancer Centre, Eruwa, (OACCE) was laid in an atmosphere devoid of pomp and pageantry of an occasion of its magnitude were it to be a state affair.

As solemn as it was, the epoch making event attracted notable dignitaries like the Eleruwa of Eruwa, the Iyalode of Yorubaland, Chief (Mrs) Alaba Lawson, Emeritus Professor T O Ogunlesi, Prof Jide Ajayi, Mr Felix Adenaike and the cream of C M S Grammar School, Bariga Old Boys.

Eruwa is the biggest and most developed of all the seven towns that make up the Ibarapa District, a populous, influential and sometimes deciding factor at elections in Oyo state. Eruwa was first placed on world map about fifty years ago, 1963, when the Rural Health Programme of the University of Ibadan took off with the backing of Prof Ogunlesi et al. Until recently when the programme was watered down, medical students were spending two full months on rotation at the District Hospital, Eruwa for their rural experience. A similar programme was initiated by Prof Olikoye Ransome-Kuti at Pakoto in Ogun state for students of College of Medicine, University of Lagos.

With the advent of Awojobi Clinic Eruwa, ACE, Eruwa has grown in leaps and bounds reaping the dividends of the pragmatic efforts and ingenuity of Dr Oluyombo Awojobi who has turned the place into a medical "Mecca" of some sort. Thanks to the visionary generosity and accommodating nature of the people who have made medical establishment a pivot for societal
development. Way back in 1986, the former Eleruwa gave ACE a 20 acre piece of land for its development. A similar gesture was made to OACCE by the current Eleruwa who gave 5 acres of land free of charge!

OACCE, an offshoot of ACE, is a not-for-profit NGO building a world class comprehensive cancer centre, first of its kind in Nigeria, that will cost 560million naira (3.5million dollars) and has promised to deliver the centre whose mission satatement is "CARING FOR CANCER PATIENTS WITH COMPASSION" on the 20th February, 2016, the 80th birthday of Prof. Ajayi! It relies heavily on generous donations and goodwill from the public. With the pragmatism of Dr Awojobi who does not believe there's a word like 'impossible', I have no doubt of the resounding success of this project. I will therefore appeal to well-meaning individuals and corporate bodies to join hands with the centre in fighting cancer. Please send your donations to: OACCE, Skye Bank, Eruwa, Account No. 1771410934.

Together, we shall succeed in taming cancer!